

INTRASEASONAL VARIABILITY

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5.1 Introduction

While the defining variability of a monsoon system is its seasonal character, its variability about its typical seasonal evolution is often of most interest and importance. In the case of the Asian and Australian summer monsoons, their intraseasonal character is especially prominent and unique.

Figure 1 compares annual rainfall variability along with the interannual and intraseasonal variability (ISV) for the Northern and Southern Hemisphere summer seasons. The annual standard deviation exhibits strong variability on either side of the equator, which is a depiction of the annual meridional migration of the tropical rainfall band – a fundamental manifestation of the monsoon. The maps of interannual variability, particularly that for boreal winter, emphasize the connection to ENSO-related SST variability in the tropical Pacific Ocean. These maps of ISV illustrate two important features. First, the intraseasonal rainfall variability is as large or larger than the variability associated with the other time scales illustrated. Second, it tends to be relatively most prominent in the Asian and Australian monsoon sectors. The time series in Figure 2 show the annual cycle of rainfall and the anomalous evolution of unfiltered and filtered rainfall over India and northern Australia for a sample of three years. These time series emphasize the overall dominance, apart from the annual variation, of the intraseasonal time scale on these monsoon systems, including its obvious role in dictating onset and break phases. Even from these simple diagnostic figures, it is evident that ISV is a fundamental component of these monsoon systems.

The material in this chapter is devoted to describing the ISV associated with the Asian, and to some extent the Australian, summer monsoon. This includes the role it plays in the monsoons' onsets and breaks, its seasonal evolution, its interannual and decadal variability and remote influences. In addition, the chapter will discuss what is understood regarding the important physical processes associated with monsoon ISV as well as our present capabilities and shortcomings in simulating and predicting it. While this book as a whole is devoted to the Asian monsoon, the treatment of ISV cannot be readily isolated to the boreal summer alone. The scientific developments associated with tropical ISV, including the observational and theoretical underpinnings as well as process-oriented modeling studies, have drawn from parallel, related and/or comprehensive studies on both boreal summer and boreal winter manifestations. For this reason, much of this chapter necessarily involves review material associated with boreal summer (e.g. Asian summer monsoon) and boreal winter (e.g. Australian summer monsoon). Where possible and appropriate, the discussion will be more tightly isolated to the Asian summer monsoon alone [e.g., 10-30 day variability, climatological intraseasonal oscillation (ISO), teleconnections]. Note that more thorough reviews of a number of the topics discussed in this chapter can be found in Lau and Waliser (2004).

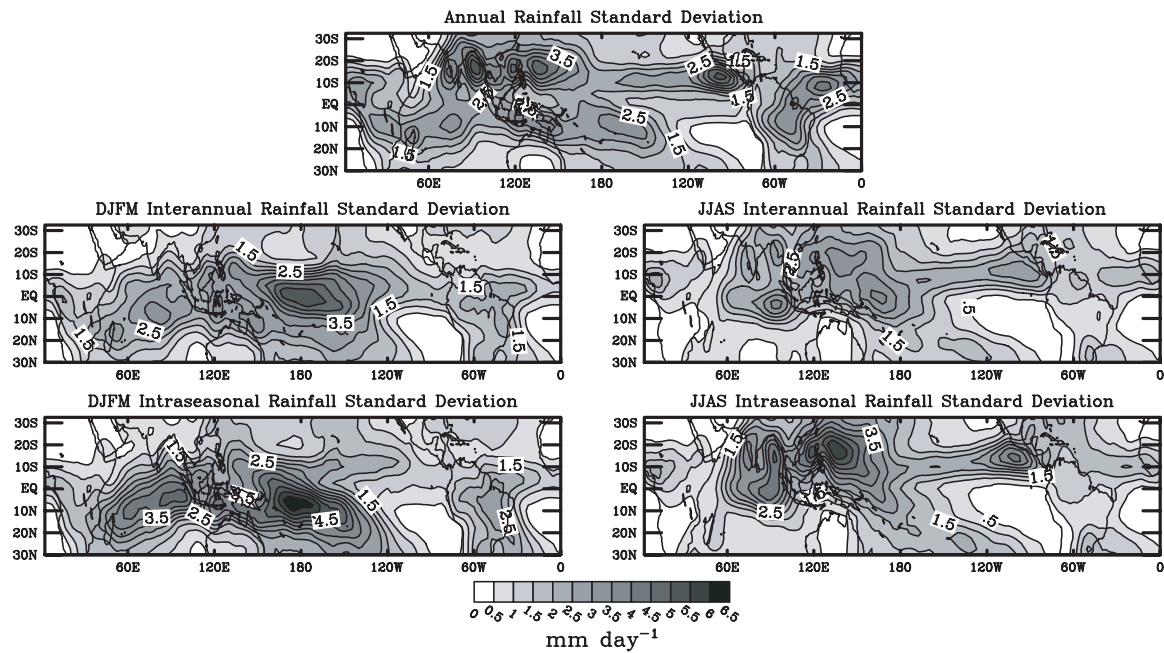


Figure 1. Rainfall variability maps for the global tropics. Rainfall data is based on pentad values of the satellite and in-situ merged CMAP product of Xie and Arkin (1997) from 1979 to 1999. (upper) Annual cycle. In this case, the mean 73-pentad annual cycle was constructed from the data and the variance was computed about the annual mean; values shown in terms of standard deviation. (middle) Interannual variability. In this case, the data were low-pass filtered, retaining periods longer than 90 days. The variance of these interannual anomalies was computed for the December-March (left) and June-September (right) periods separately; values shown in terms of standard deviation. (lower) ISV. In this case, the data were band-pass filtered, retaining periods between 30 and 90 days. The variance of these intraseasonal anomalies was computed for the December-March (left) and June-September (right) periods separately; values shown in terms of standard deviation.

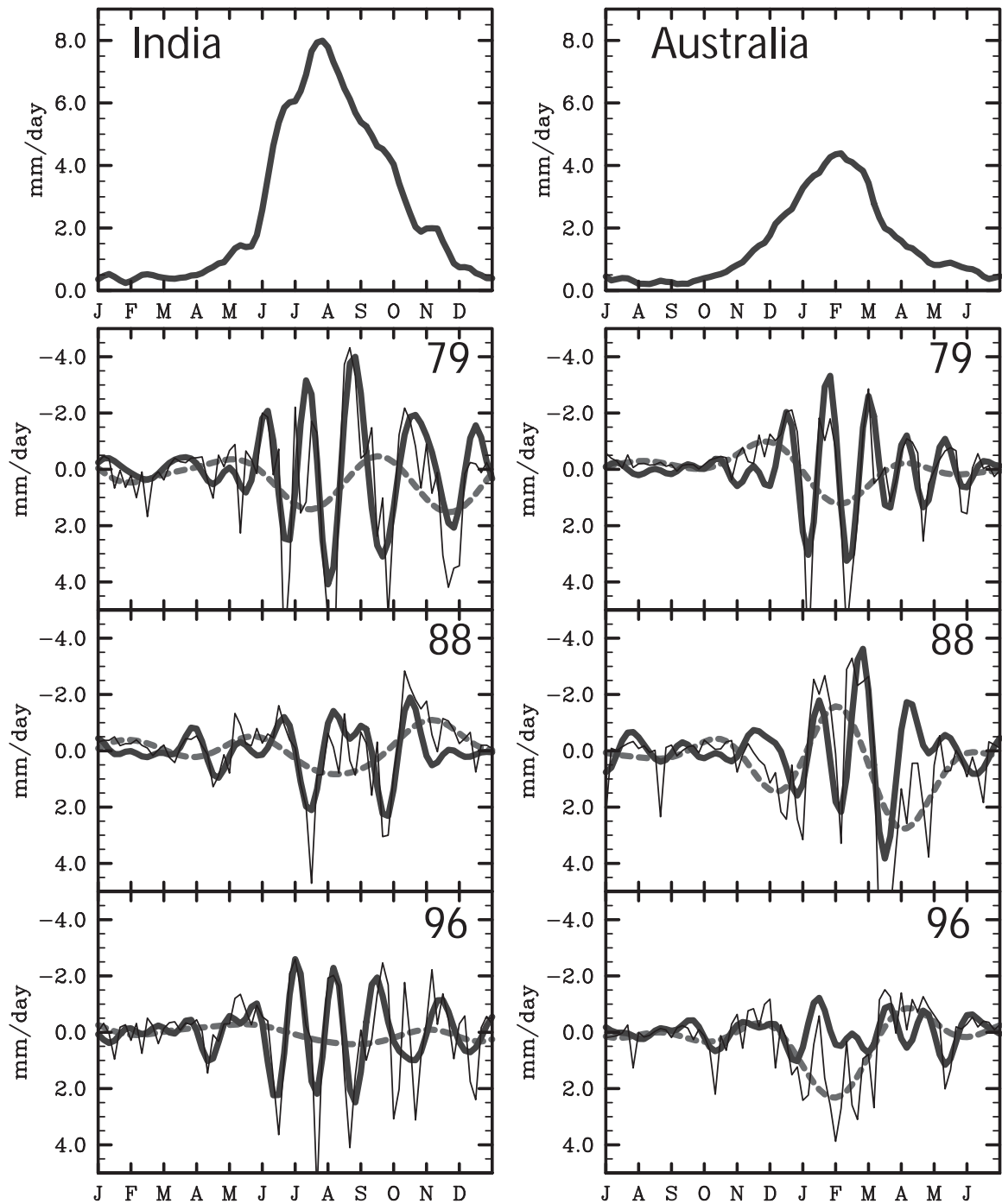


Figure 2. Time series of rainfall over India (left) and Australia (right). Rainfall data is based on pentad values of the satellite and in-situ merged CMAP product of Xie and Arkin (1997) from 1979 to 1999. The data plotted for India (Australia) are the domain averages of the grid points lying within India (Australia, lying north of 25°S). (top) Mean 73-pentad annual cycle. (lower three panels) The thin black lines are pentad anomaly values, the thick black lines are 30-90 day band-passed values, and the thick dashed lines are 90 day low-pass values for the years 1979, 1988 and 1996.

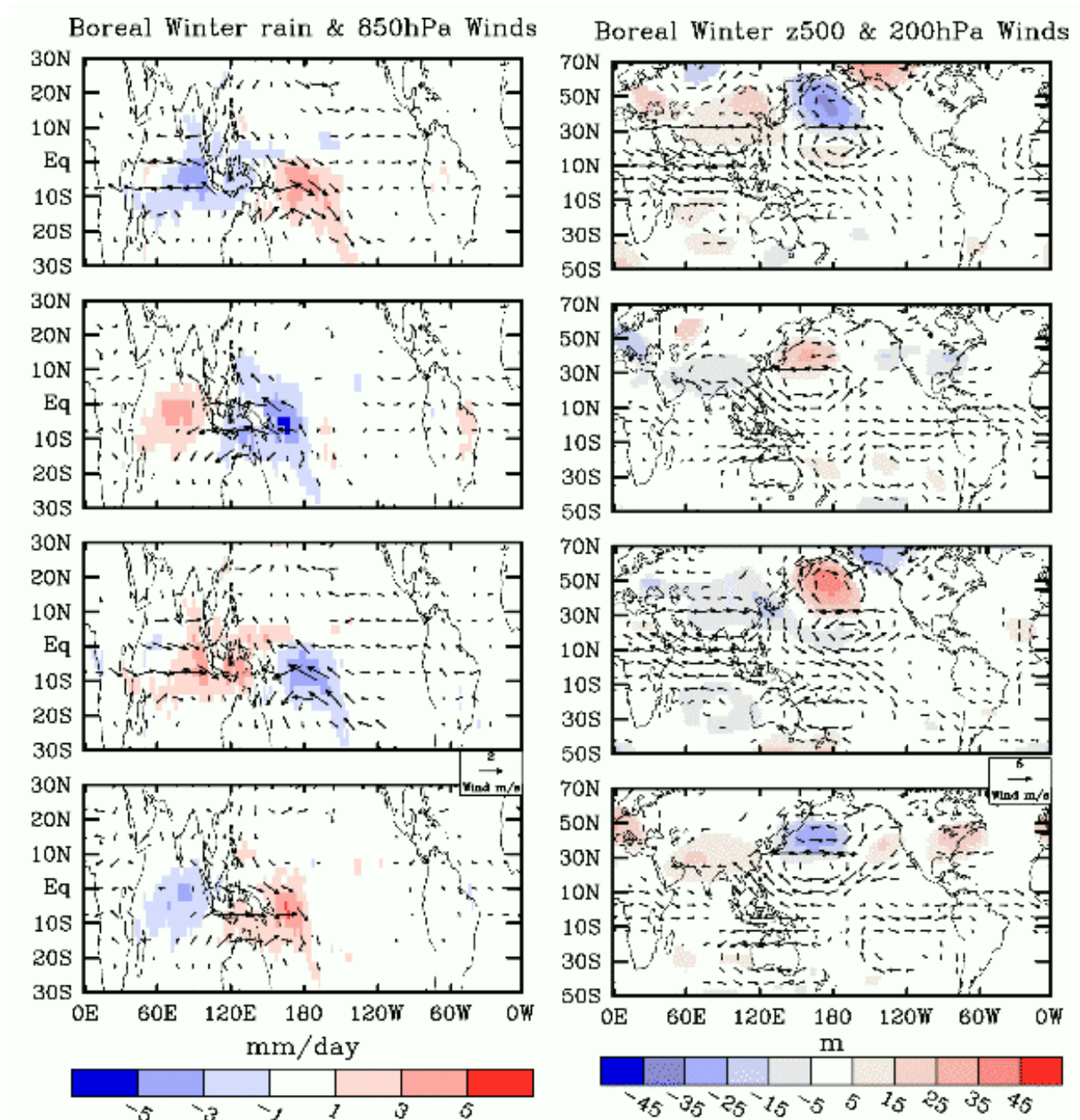


Figure 3. Canonical structure of an MJO event based on 5-day average (i.e. pentad) NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis (Kalnay *et al.*, 1996) and CMAP rainfall data (Xie and Arkin, 1997) from 1979-2000. Data were bandpassed filtered with a 30-90 day filter and then separated into boreal winter (Nov-Apr) and summer (May-Oct). Extended EOF (EEOF) analysis with ± 5 pentad lags was performed on tropical rainfall (30N-30S, 30E to 180E) to identify the dominant "mode" for the winter and summer separately. Composite events were constructed by selecting events if the EEOF amplitude time series exceeded 1 standard deviation [$N = 43$ (49) for winter (summer)]. The resulting composites have dimensions lag (-5 to +5 pentads), latitude and longitude. In the plots above, only 4 panels of the boreal winter composite are shown, each separated by 2.5 pentads (i.e. 12.5 days). Plots on the left show composite rainfall and 850 hPa wind vectors between 30N and 30S. Plots on the right show 500 hPa geopotential heights and 200 hPa wind vectors between 30N and 30S. Only values that exceed the 90% confidence limit are shown.

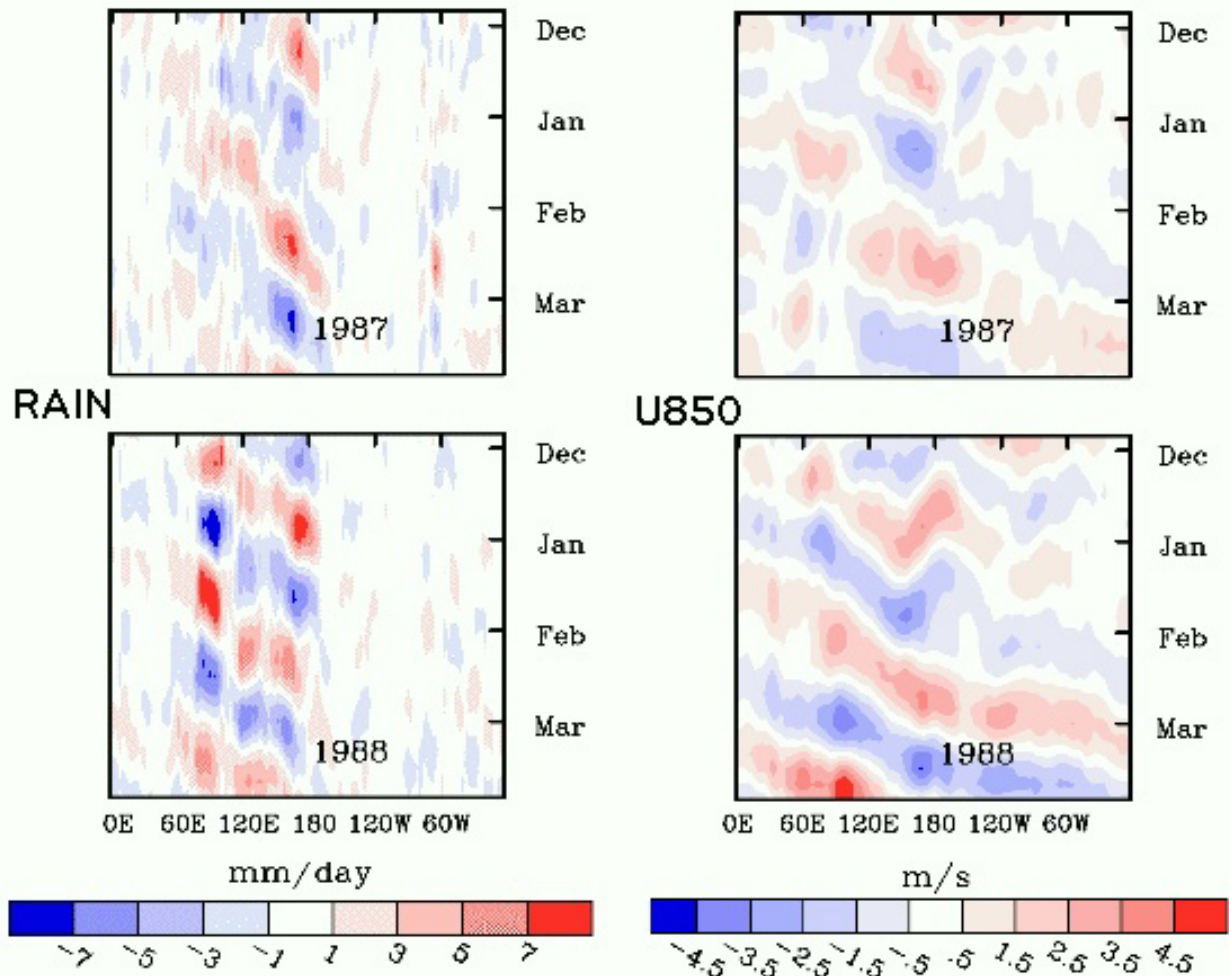


Figure 4. Time-longitude diagrams of 30-90 day bandpass filtered (left) CMAP rainfall data (Xie and Arkin, 1997) and (right) NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis 850 hPa zonal winds (Kalnay *et al.*, 1996) for the winters of 1986-87 and 1987-88. Data were averaged between 10N and 10S.

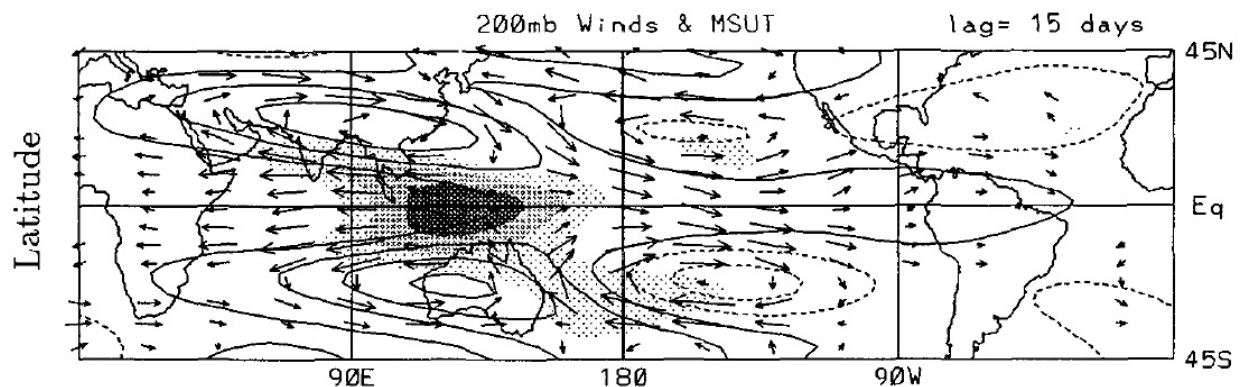


Figure 5. Longitude-latitude map for a composite MJO event 15 days after positive rainfall anomaly passed over 85°E. Vectors are 200 hPa winds anomalies, contours are MSU Channel 2 temperature anomalies, and shadings are OLR anomalies. Data were bandpass filtered to eastward wavenumbers 1-3 and 35-95 day periods. Maximum vectors are 2.7 m s^{-1} and temperature contours are $7.0 \times 10^{-2} \text{ K}$. OLR is converted to equivalent blackbody temperatures and the shading starts at 0.5 K and change every 1.25 K, with positive values indicating enhanced convection. From Hendon and Salby (1994).

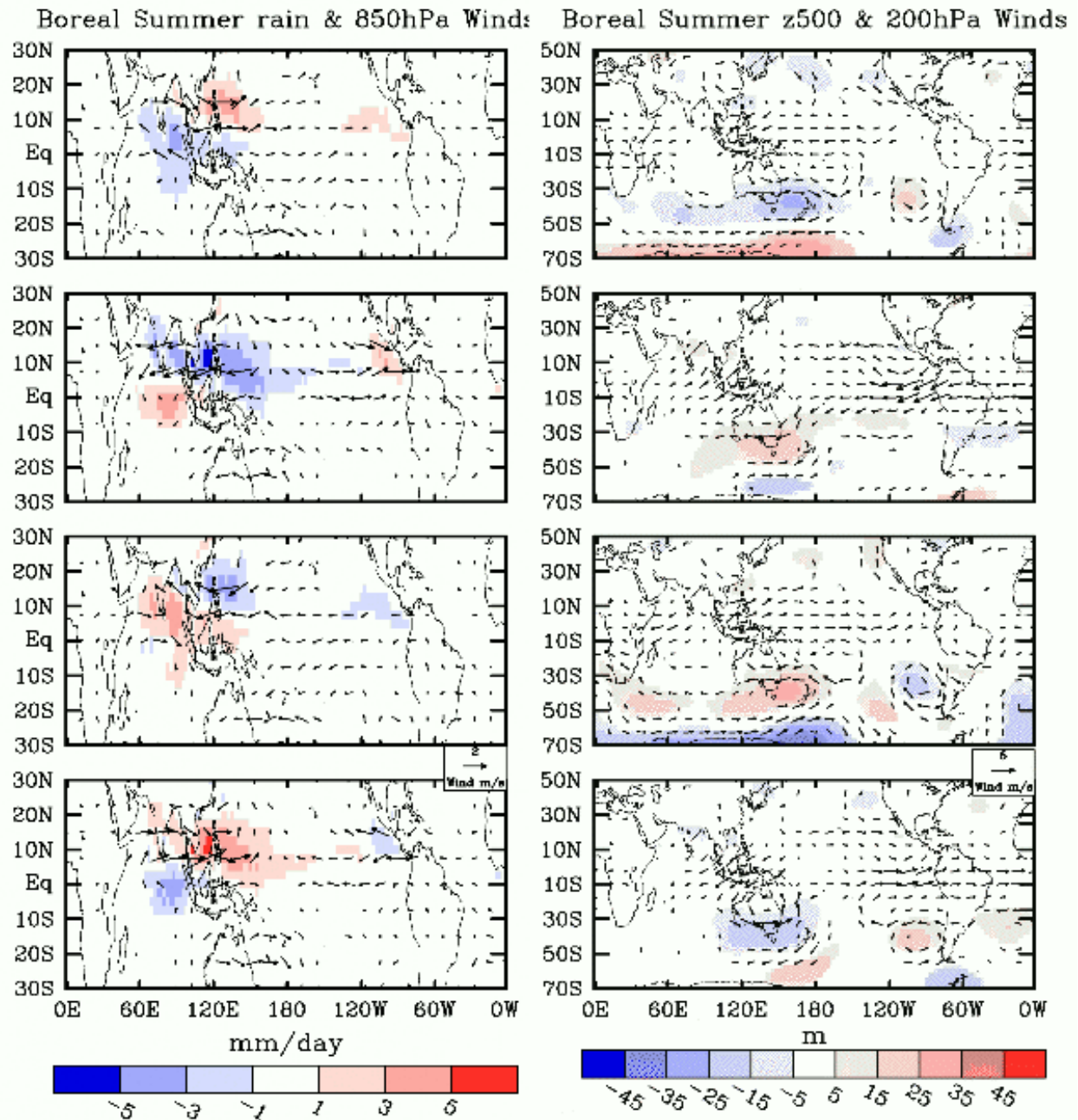


Figure 6. Same as

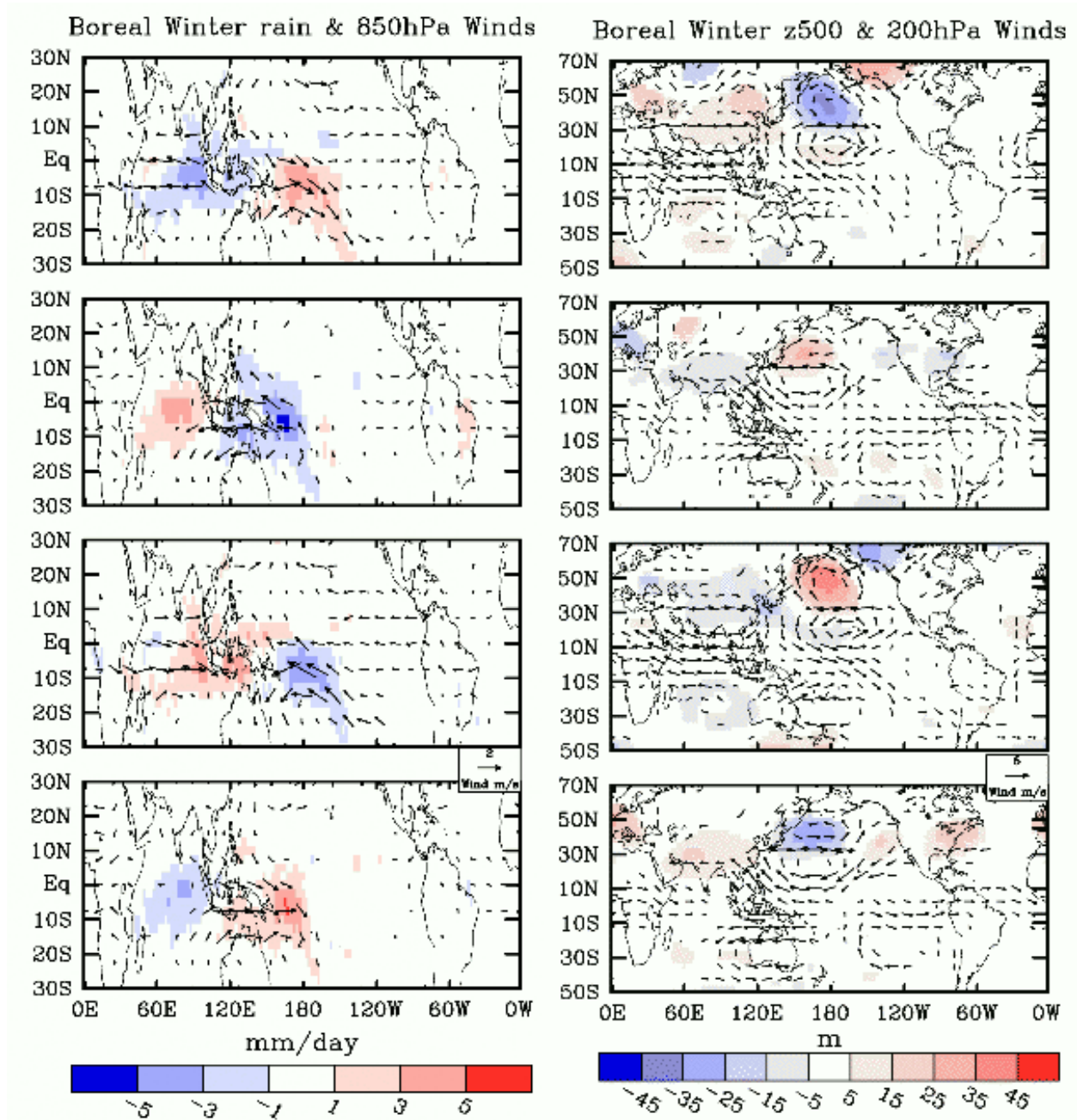


Figure 3, except for boreal summer (May-Oct).

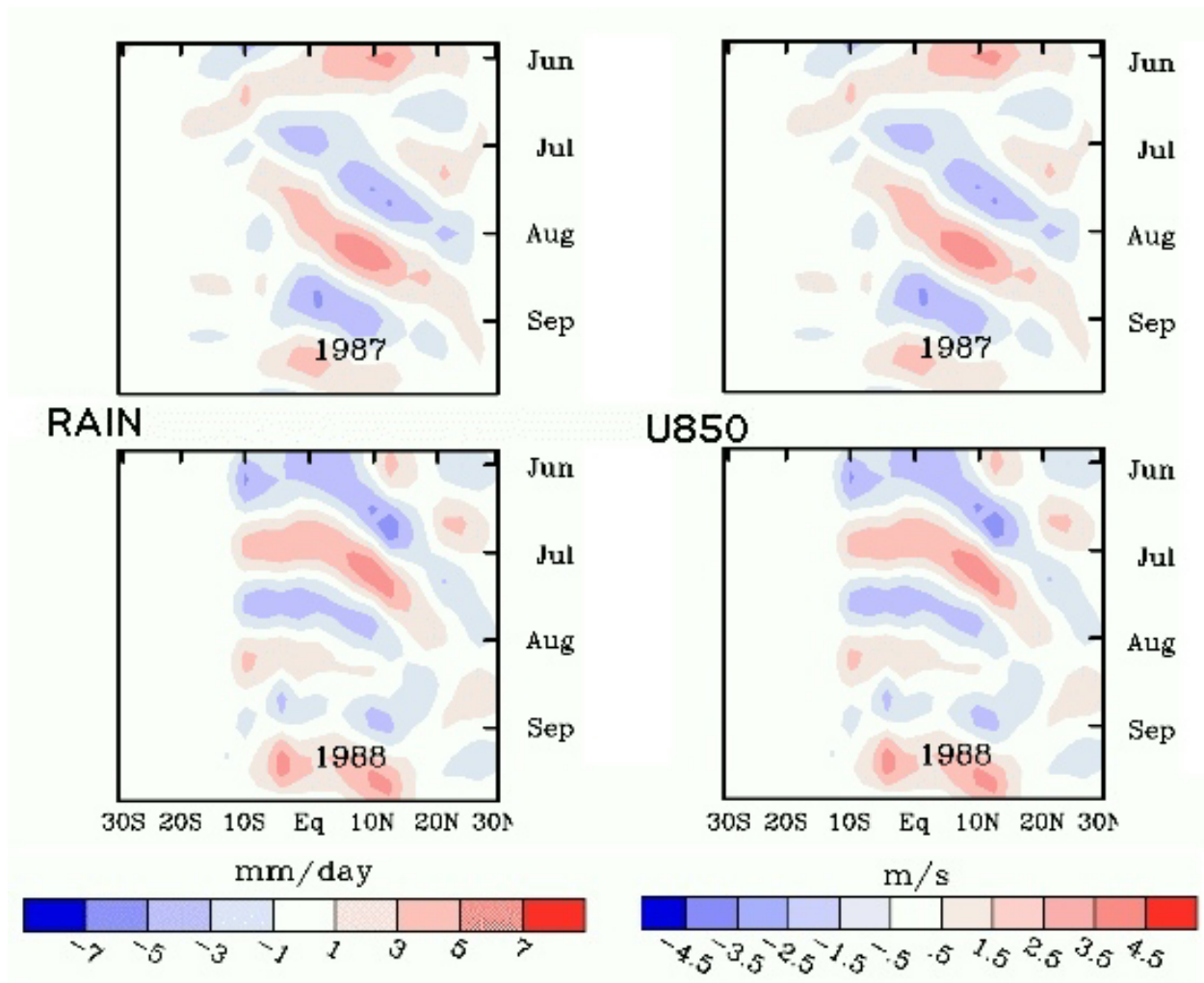


Figure 7. Time-latitude diagrams of 30-90 day bandpass filtered (left) CMAP rainfall data (Xie and Arkin, 1997) and (right) NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis 850 hPa zonal winds (Kalnay *et al.*, 1996) for the summers of 1987 and 1988. Data were averaged between 80E and 110E. .

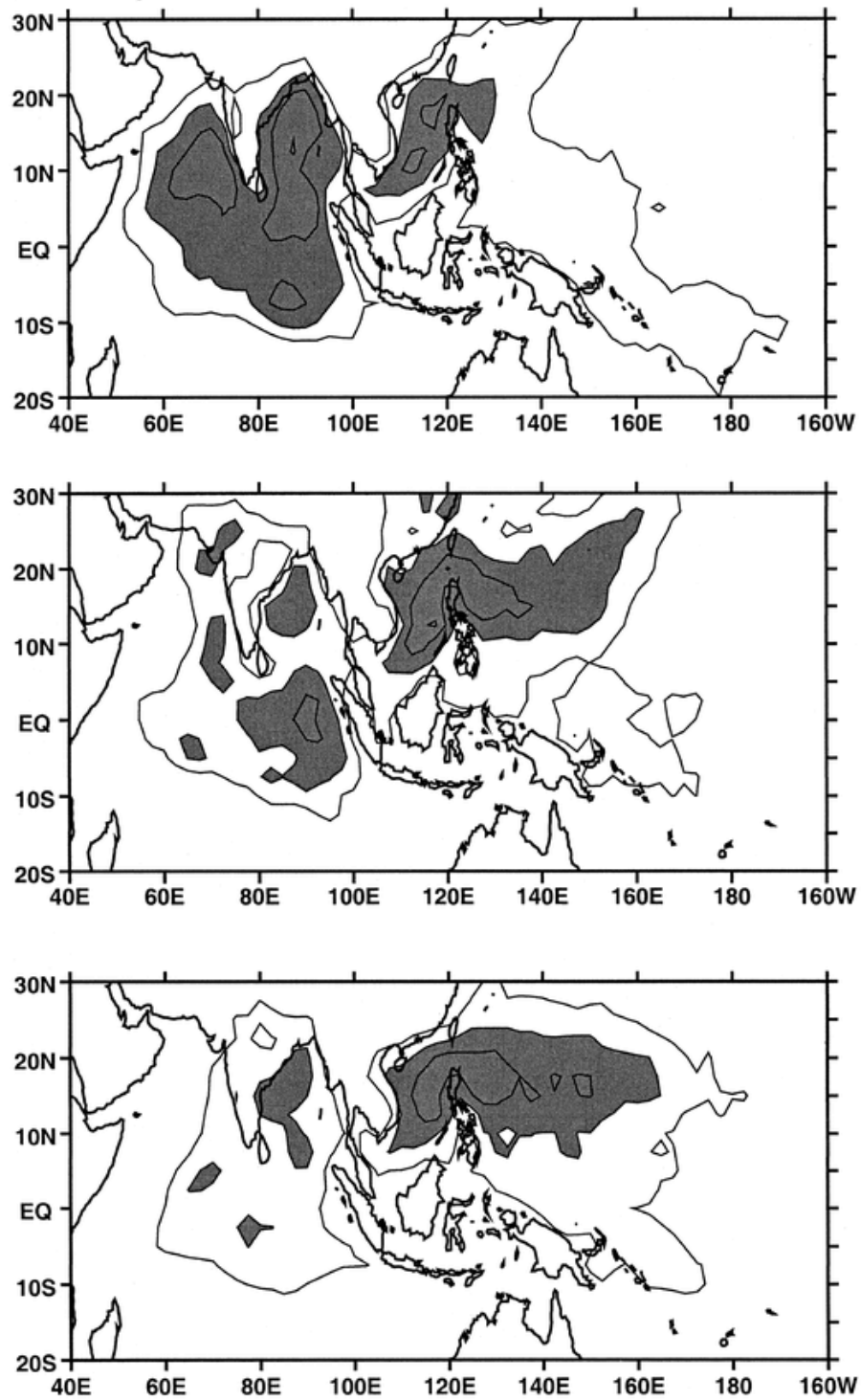


Figure 8. Seasonal variation of 10–100-day filtered OLR variance. (top) May–Jun average, (middle) Jul average, and (bottom) Aug–Oct average. Contour interval is $250 \text{ (W m}^{-2})^2$. First contour at $500 \text{ (W m}^{-2})^2$. Regions where the OLR variance $> 750 \text{ (W m}^{-2})^2$ are shaded. From Kemball-Cook and Wang (2001).

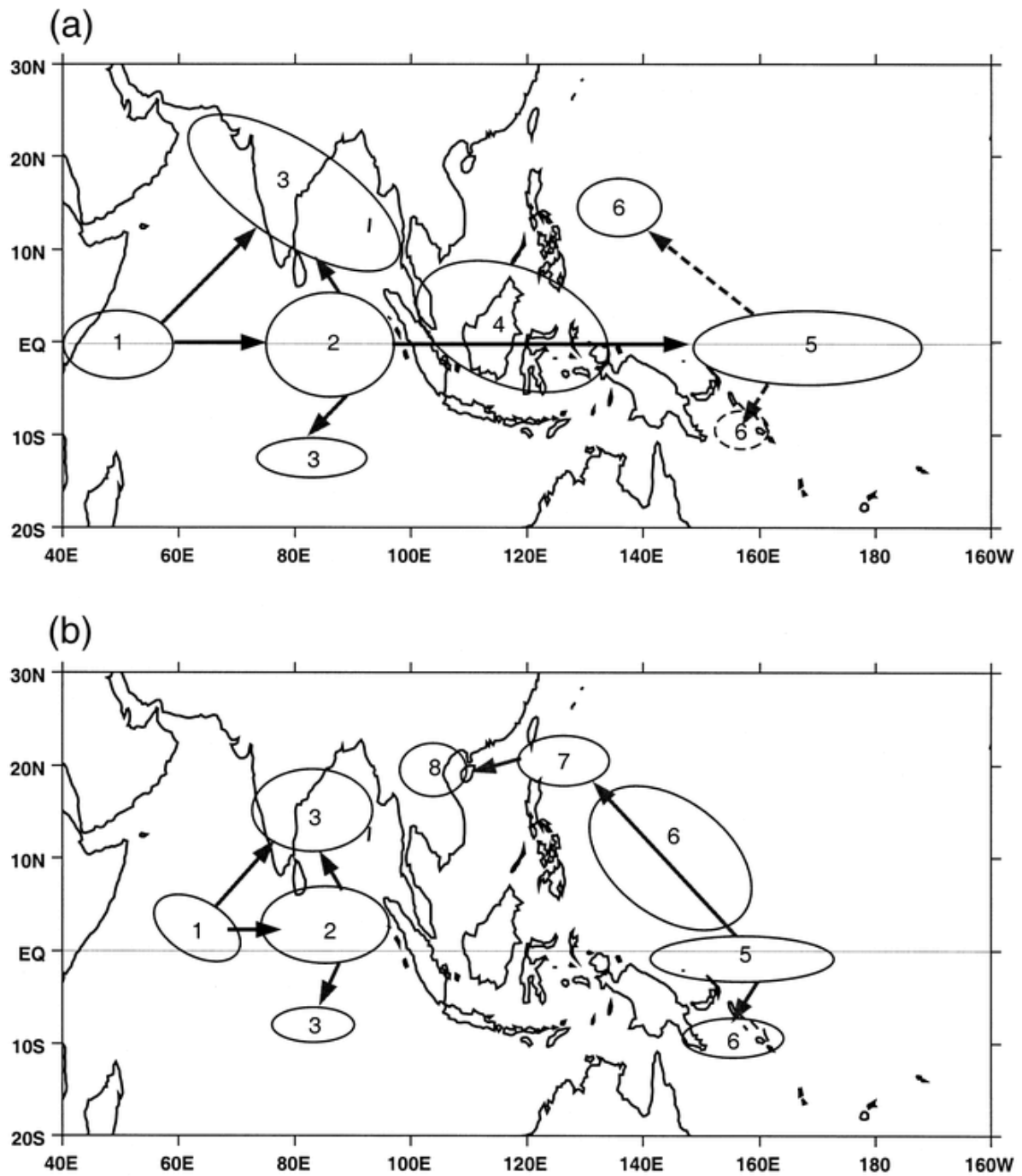


Figure 9. Boreal summer ISO convection life-cycle for (a) May–Jun and (b) Aug–Oct (Kemball-Cook and Wang, 2001). Ovals indicate convection, with numbers indicating the evolution of the anomaly. Horizontal arrows indicate eastward propagation of convection along or near the equator. Vertical/slanted arrows indicate poleward propagation of convection due to emanation of Rossby waves from equatorial convection. Dashed lines indicate low-amplitude signal.

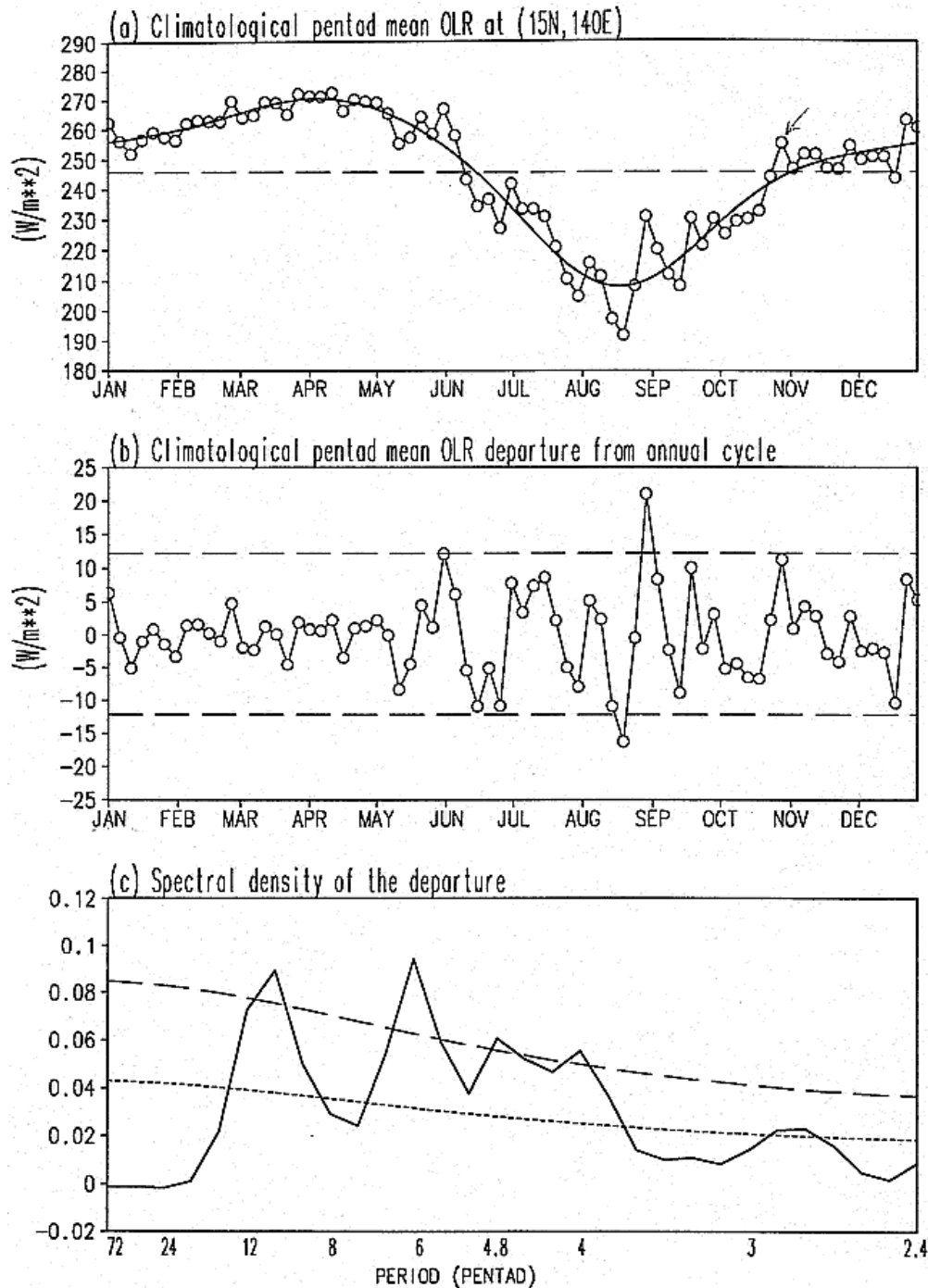


Figure 10. (a) Climatological pentad mean OLR at 15°N, 140°E and the base annual cycle (heavy line) defined by the sum of its first four Fourier harmonics. (b) The climatological pentad mean OLR departure from the base annual cycle. The dashed lines show the upper and lower bounds of the mean plus two standard deviations. (c) The spectral density of the departure. The dashed and dotted lines denote the upper and lower bounds of the 95% confidence interval against a red noise background. From Wang and Xu (1997).

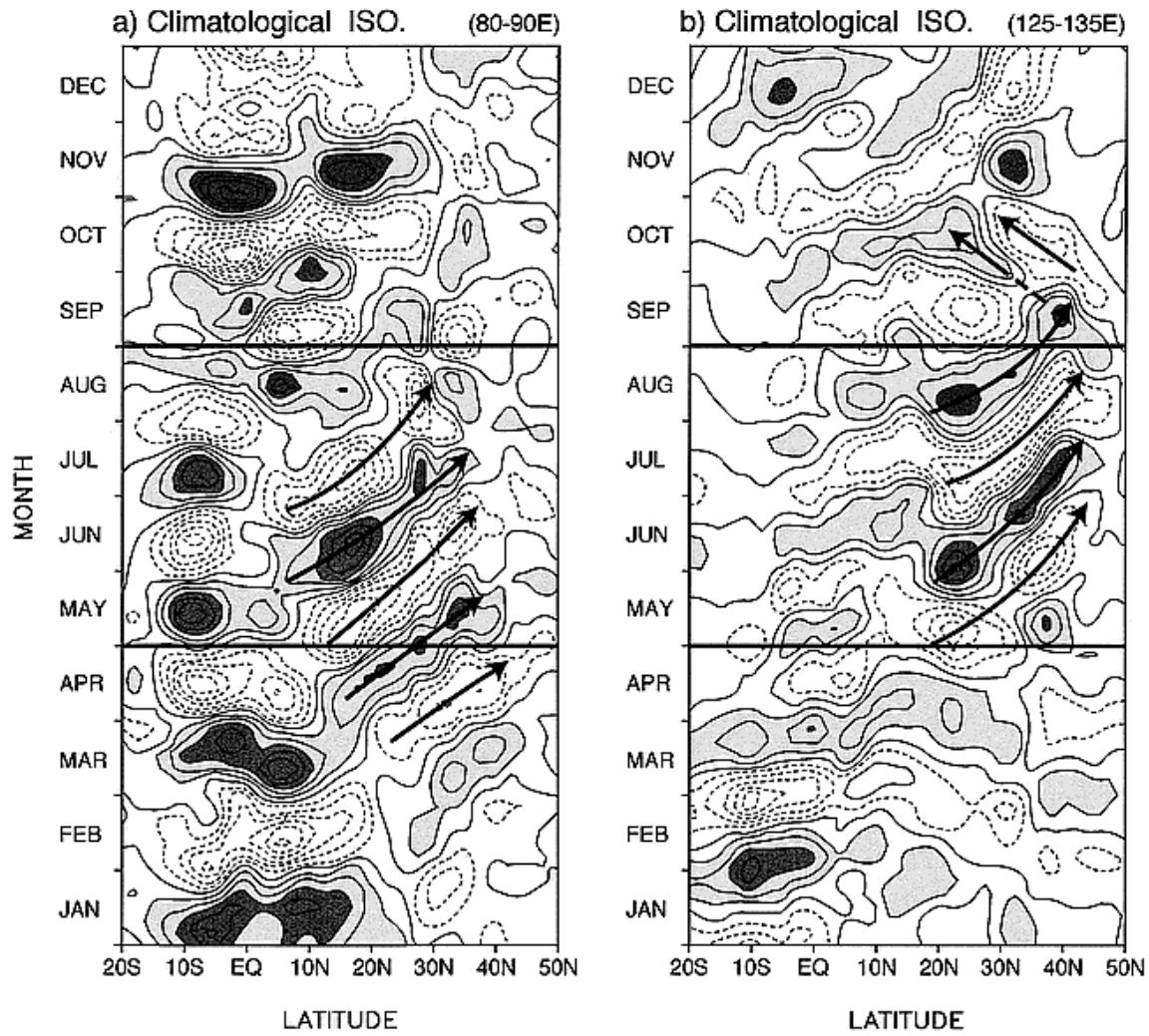


Figure 11. Hovmöller diagrams of climatological intraseasonal component of cloud fraction along longitudinal bands of (a) 80°–90°E and (b) 125°–135°E. Contour interval is 0.02. Light and dark shading indicate the cloud fractions between 0.02 and 0.06 and those greater than 0.06, respectively. From Kang *et al.* (1999).

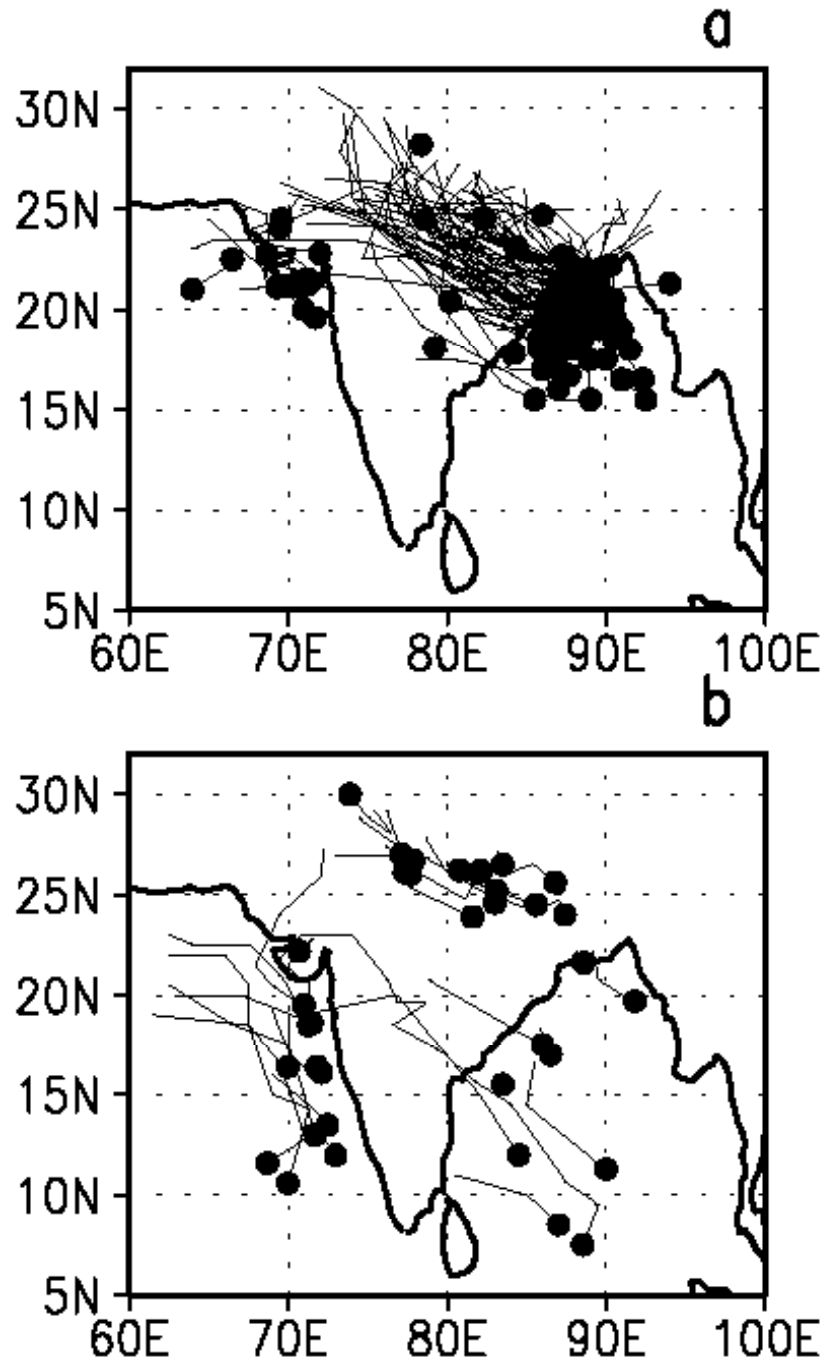


Figure 12. Tracks of low-pressure systems (LPS) for the period 1954–1983 during extreme phases of boreal summer ISO. (a) ‘Active’ ISO phase (analogous to 4th panel of Figure 6) and (b) ‘Break’ ISO phase (analogous to 2nd panel of Figure 6). Dark dots represent the genesis point of the LPS and their lines show the tracks. From Goswami *et al.* (2003).

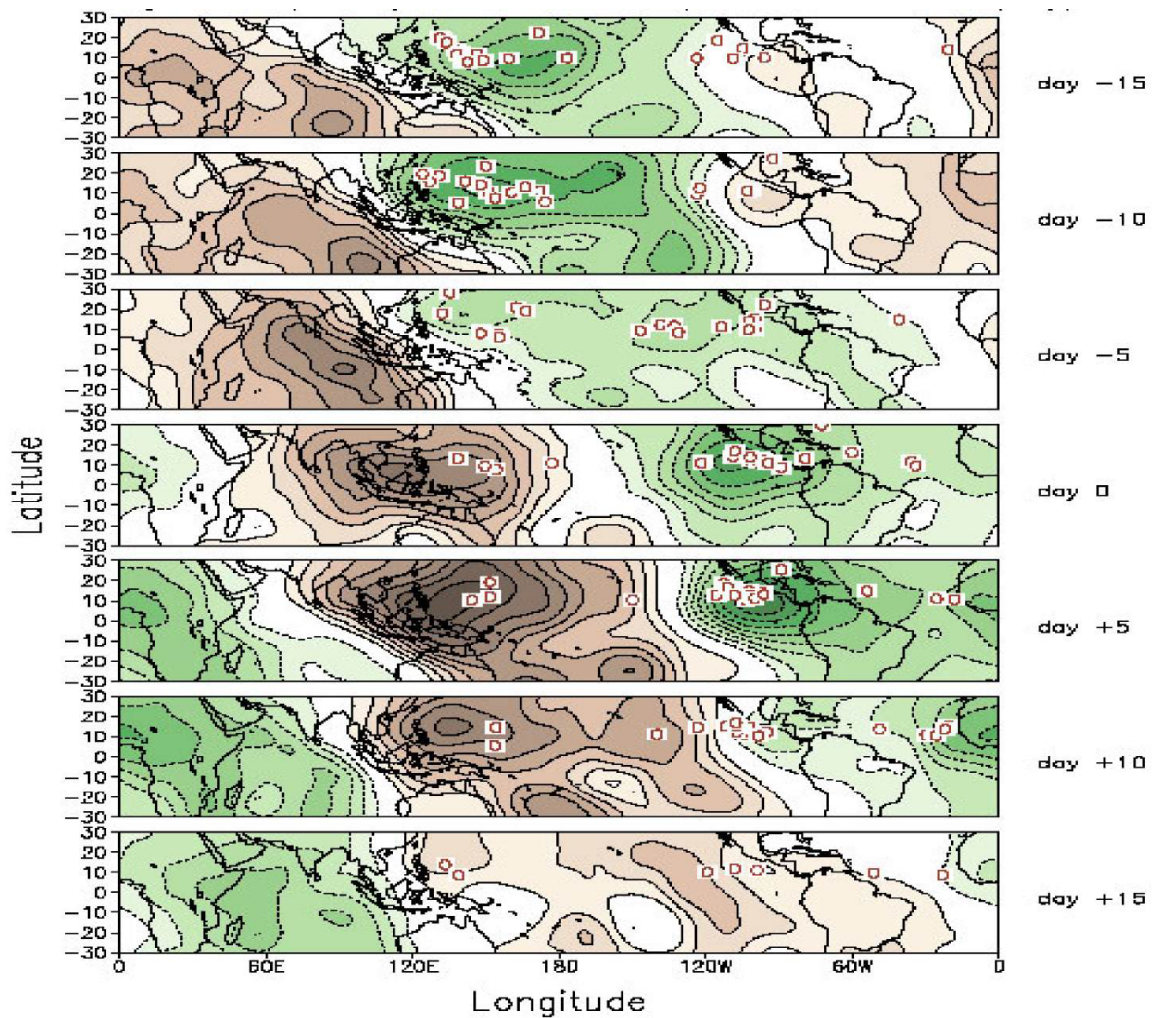


Figure 13. Composite evolution of 200 hPa velocity potential anomalies associated with the boreal summer ISO and points of origin of tropical systems that developed into hurricanes/typhoons. Note that panels 1-4 in Figure 6 roughly correspond to lags -5, +5, +15 and 15 days, respectively. The green (brown) shading roughly corresponds to regions where convection is favored (suppressed) as represented by 200-hPa velocity potential anomalies Composites are based on 21 ISO events, each considered over a 35 day period. Hurricane track data is for the period July-September for 1979-1997. Points of origin in each panel are for different storms – only those that occurred during the 21 selected ISO events. Contour interval is $0.5 \times 10^6 \text{ m}^2 \text{ s}^{-1}$, negative contours are dashed, and the zero contour is omitted for clarity. From Higgins *et al.* (2000).

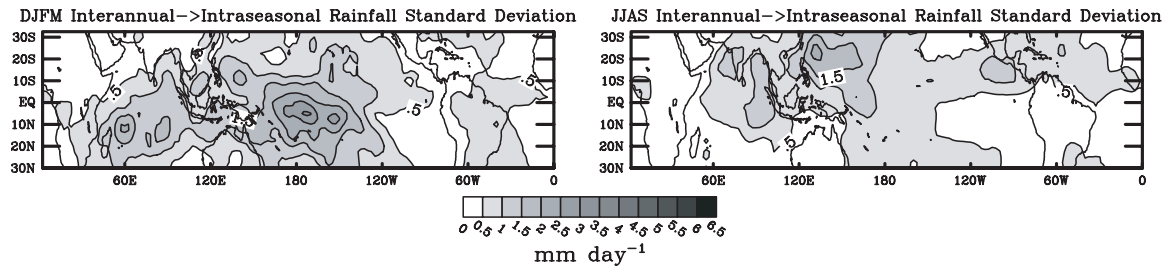


Figure 14. Interannual variation of intraseasonal rainfall variability. Rainfall data is based on pentad values of the satellite and in-situ merged CMAP product of Xie and Arkin (1997) from 1979 to 1999. In this case, the data were band-pass filtered, retaining periods between 30 and 90 days. The variance of these intraseasonal anomalies was computed separately for the each December-March (DJFM; left) and June-September (JJAS; right) period. The variance of these values [N=21 (20) for JJAS (DJFM)] was computed and is illustrated in terms of standard deviation.

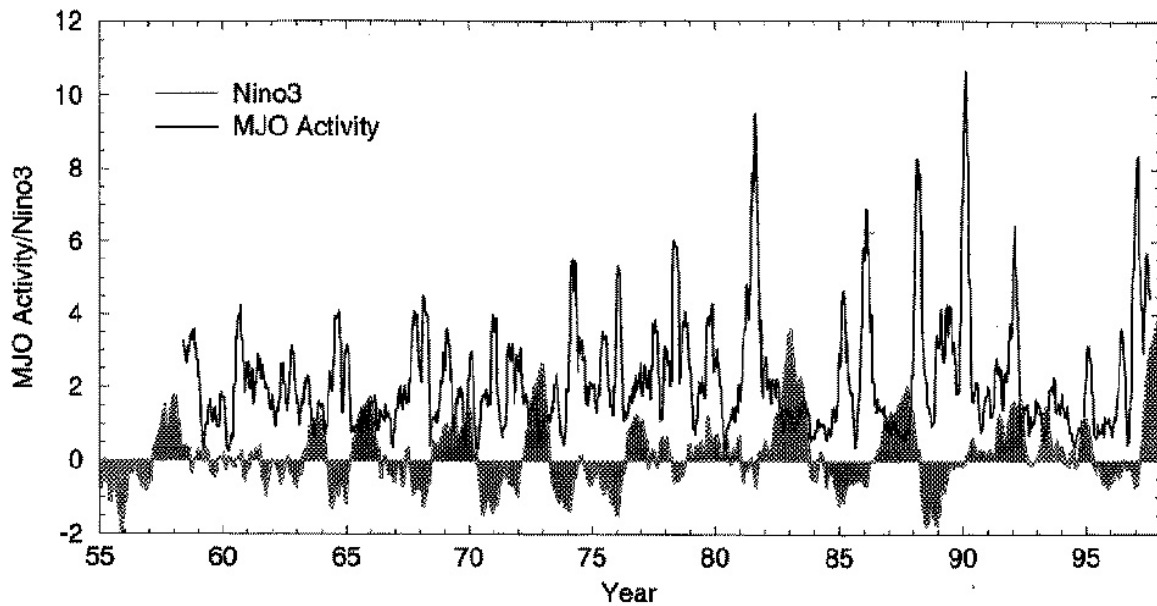


Figure 15. Index of MJO activity based on the variance of band-passed (10-90 days) upper-tropospheric zonal-mean zonal winds averaged between 10°S-10°N. Data are from the NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis (Kalnay *et al.*, 1996). A 100-day running mean has been applied to the variance time series. The lower shaded curve is the sea surface temperature anomaly (K) for the Nino3 region (5°N-5°S, 90°W-150°W). From Slingo *et al.* (1999).

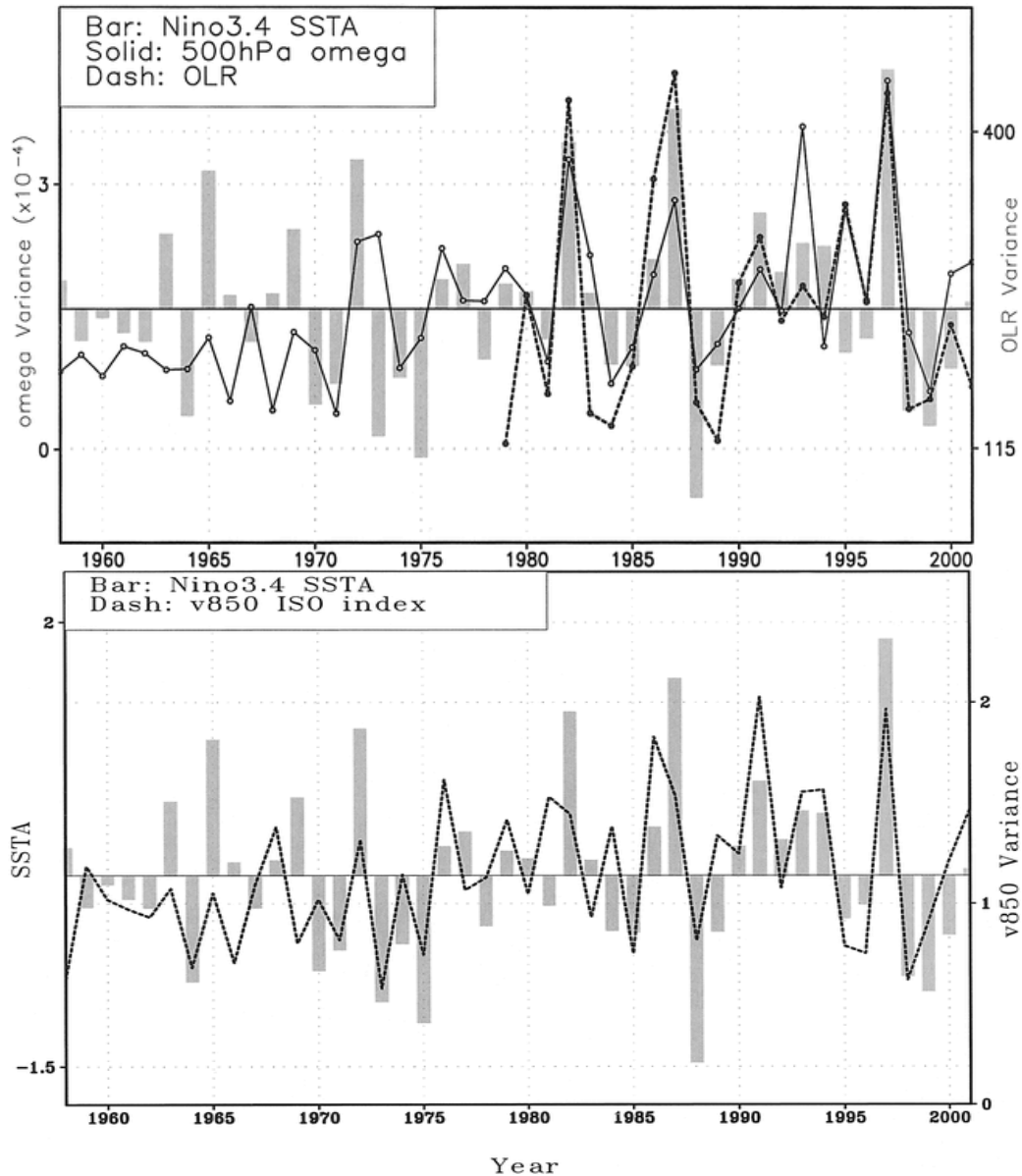


Figure 16. (upper) May-Jul 500-hPa vertical velocity MJO index (solid) during 1958–2001, the OLR MJO index (dash) during 1979–2001, and May-Jul mean Niño-3.4 SST anomaly (bar; see scale on lower plot) during 1958–2001. Vertical velocity and OLR data taken from the NCEP/NCAR Reanalysis (Kalnay *et al.*, 1996) and the OLR construction of Liebmann and Smith (1996), respectively. The MJO index is defined as the mean spectrum density for 20–50-day eastward-propagating wavenumber-1 (at 40°E–180°) anomalies averaged at 2.5°S–5°N for the vertical velocity and at 5°S–10°N for OLR. (lower) Similar to upper diagram, except for Jul-Oct mean Niño-3.4 SST anomaly (bar) and mean spectrum density of 10–50-day wavenumber-1–3 (at 100°E–180°) westward-propagating 850-hPa meridional wind anomaly (dash) at 5°–20°N.

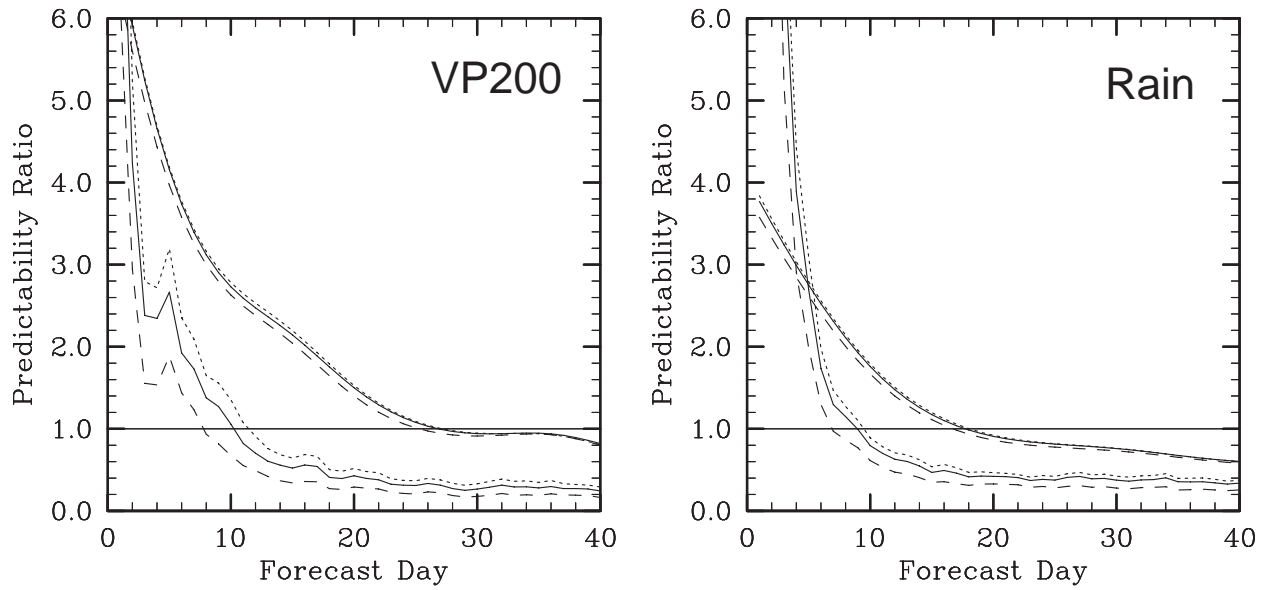
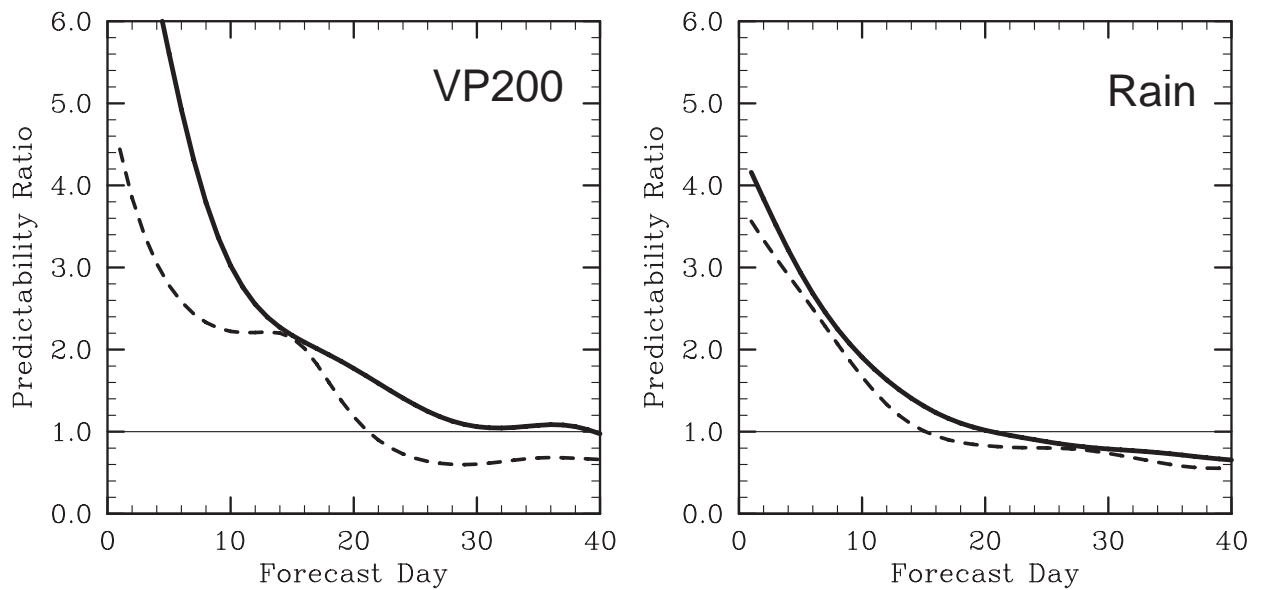
ISO vs Weather**Strong ISO vs Weak ISO**

Figure 17. (top) ISO predictability versus lead time for 200 hPa velocity potential (VP200; left) and rainfall (right) averaged over the region 4°N-24°N and 72.5°E-132.5°E. The results are based on all 168 N.H. summertime cases from the dynamical forecasts. The rightmost (leftmost) group of lines are based on an evaluation using filtered (unfiltered) data to ascertain the predictability of the model's ISO (weather). (bottom) Same as (top), except that the solid (dashed) lines are based on forecasts using the 80 strongest (weakest) ISO cases.

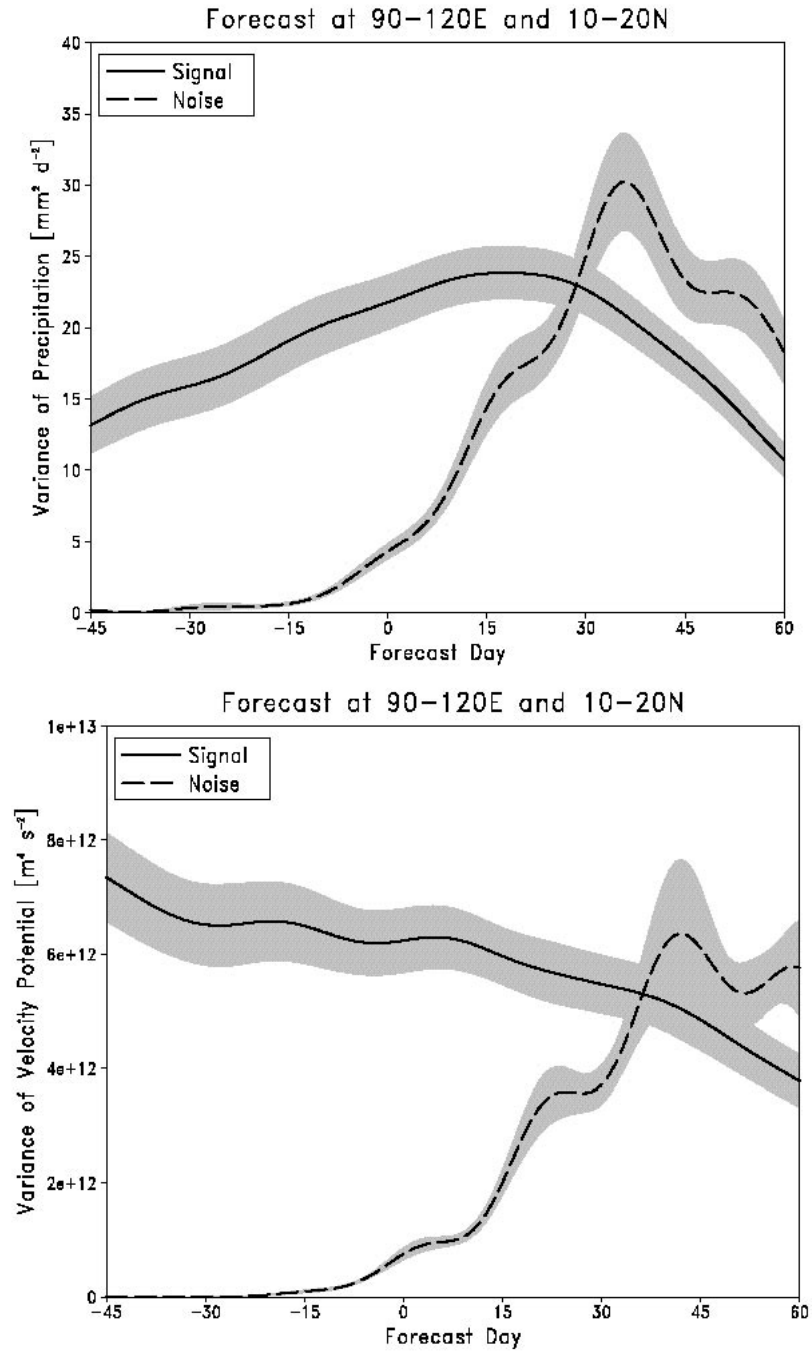


Figure 18. Signal-to-noise ratio of 30-90 day filtered precipitation (top) and 200 hPa velocity potential (bottom) predictions averaged over all four phases of three ISO events. Shadings represent the significance at the 95% interval based on all 12 forecasts. All values are averaged over the region 90 to 120 °E and 10 to 20°N. From Liess *et al.* (2004).

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